

# **Joint Ocean Commission Initiative**

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## **New Bipartisan Joint Ocean Commission Initiative Commends California's Ocean Strategy**

### **Momentum for Ocean Policy Reform Building**

#### **Joint Initiative Leaders Admiral James D. Watkins, The Honorable Leon E. Panetta Urge State and Federal Governments to Build on California's Initiative**

**Washington, D.C.** – Commending California for its progressive efforts to protect, restore and maintain its oceans and coasts, and urging the federal government and other states to consider the state's strategy as a model to help guide their efforts in reforming ocean policy was the focus of a letter from the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative to the recently established White House-based Committee on Ocean Policy.

Late last week the California Ocean Protection Council sent their *California Ocean and Coastal Information, Research, and Outreach Strategy* to the Chairman of the White House's Committee on Ocean Policy, the nation's coastal governors, and key members of Congress. While designed for California, the plan clearly demonstrates that coastal states have a significant interest in working with the federal government.

"The federal government should pay close attention to this strategy during the implementation of the President's Ocean Action Plan," said the letter from the Joint Initiative's co-chairs, Admiral James D. Watkins USN (Ret.), and the Honorable Leon E. Panetta, chairmen of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and Pew Oceans Commission respectively. "The U.S. Commission called for federal support for science driven ocean policy and for a doubling, of the federal financial commitment to ocean and coastal research. California has heard this message and is taking decisive action. We support California and plan to work closely with them to help ensure its implementation. We are also aware of expanding efforts in other states and regions around the nation and believe these initiatives are the foundation of a new national ocean policy."

Inherent in the California plan is recognition that collaboration with other states and the federal government is necessary to support applied research and promote the collection of critical information.

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“This is the kind of national leadership we have been looking for from a coastal state,” continued the letter. “Both the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission called for science driven management and this new state strategy from California is making critical progress on this issue. The additional focus on reaching out to the public and educating citizens about ocean and coastal issues is of great importance, and we are particularly pleased to see this component included in their strategy. ”

The California Ocean Protection Council adopted the ocean strategy during its September meeting at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. The research priorities set forth in the strategy include fisheries analysis and aquaculture; protection and restoration of organisms, habitats, and ecosystems; beach and shoreline management and coastal hazard identification; strategies to improve air, water, and sediment quality; invasive species prevention; and expanded outreach efforts.

“Research should be the foundation of good public policy, but too often it’s not,” said California Secretary for Resources, Mike Chrisman, who also chairs the California Ocean Protection Council. “This strategy is the first step toward reversing that trend and we want to work with the federal government to implement its provisions.”

The California council has committed \$1 million dollars to ocean and coastal research through a partnership with California’s two Sea Grant programs. The council also is moving forward with a \$21 million dollar commitment to California ocean observing systems programs.

The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative is a collaborative effort of the US Commission on Ocean Policy and Pew Oceans Commission to catalyze ocean policy reform. The Initiative is guided by a ten-member Task Force, five from each Commission, and led by Admiral James Watkins and Mr. Leon Panetta, chairs of the U.S. Commission and Pew Commission, respectively. The primary goal of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative is to accelerate the pace of change that results in meaningful ocean policy reform. For more information please visit [www.jointoceancommission.org](http://www.jointoceancommission.org)